

# **Operational Handbook**

## **Child Trafficking**

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Introduction**

This handbook has been developed to be used in conjunction with the following protocols and guidance:

- All Wales Child Trafficking Protocol
- Safeguarding Children who may have been trafficked
- All Wales Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children at risk of or abused through Sexual Exploitation (2008)

## **2. Aim**

The aim of this handbook is not to replace the above child trafficking protocol or guidance but to act as quick guide for practitioners in particular First Responders with statutory safeguarding responsibilities in respect of:

- Actions that need to be taken immediately to safeguard
- The safe placement of children who may have been trafficked

## **3. Definition**

Council of Europe's Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings defines 'Trafficking in Children' as:

'The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of person's under 18 years of age, for the purpose of exploitation.'  
'Exploitation' includes: 'sexual exploitation, forced labour or services. Slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

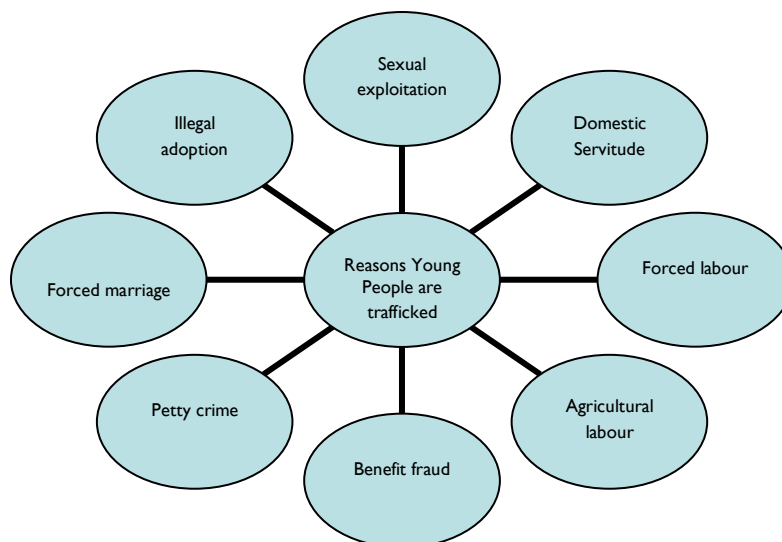
In this connection it is immaterial whether or not the child consents to be exploited'

## **4. Information Sharing**

Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. Whenever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. However, in some circumstances, consent may not be possible or appropriate but the safety and welfare of a child may dictate that the information must be shared. (Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act 2004)

The duty of confidentiality is not absolute. Where a professional believes that there is a serious risk to the health, safety or welfare of a child, young person or others, which is serious enough to outweigh young person's right to privacy, they should follow the All Wales Child Protection Procedures.

## 5. Reasons why children are trafficked



## 6. Means by which children are brought into the UK

There are two ways a child may enter the UK;

- Either accompanied by adult/s or
- As unaccompanied minors.

Significant numbers of children are referred to local authority children's services after applying for asylum and some even register at school for up to a term, before disappearing again. It is thought that they are trafficked out of the UK to other European countries or trafficked internally within the UK.

However, recent experience suggests that as traffickers perceive checks have improved at the larger ports of entry such as Heathrow and Gatwick, they are starting to use the smaller regional airports and ports making welsh ports at risk such as Holyhead, Pembroke Dock to exploitation by individuals and as well as organised gangs.

Trafficked children have entered Wales via a range of routes and ports (including the asylum process) and are referred to Children's Services by a range of agencies. When questioned, most of the children appear to have very little knowledge or information about the person/people who brought them into the UK. Where there are suspicions that a child may have been trafficked and their age is disputed by an agency such as the UKBA (based on their appearance), domestic and international law (**EU Trafficking Convention, Article 10**) states that **age disputed children have to be given the benefit of the doubt and presumed to be children by the Local Authority until their age is verified**. This places a duty on Local Authorities to provide care, support and protection for age disputed victims of trafficking until a full age assessment has been completed by Children's Services to determine whether they are children or not.

## 6.1 Accompanied children

Very little is known about accompanied children, some of who will have travelled either legitimately or illegitimately with their parents. Others may be brought in by adults either purporting to be their parents or stating that they have the parents' permission to bring the child.

There are many legitimate reasons for children being brought to the UK, such as to seek asylum, economic migration with their family, education, and re-unification with family or fleeing a war-torn country. To curb illegal migration and improve children's safeguards, **new global visa regulations** were introduced in **February 2006. Safeguards have been introduced and a photograph of the child is now required on the visa, together with the passport number of the adult/s who have been given permission to travel with the child.**

Some children who enter the UK accompanied by an adult are believed to subsequently apply for asylum claiming to be unaccompanied, after being told by their trafficker that by doing so they will be legally granted permission to reside in the UK and be entitled to claim welfare benefits.

## 6.2 Unaccompanied children

*An Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child is a child who is: Applying for asylum in their own right; and is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law has responsibility to do so. A child may move between the unaccompanied and accompanied categories whilst their asylum applications are under consideration, e.g. where a child arrives alone but is later united with other family members in the UK, or a child arrives with their parents or close relatives but is later abandoned, or a trafficked child, or one brought in on false papers with an adult claiming to be a relative.*

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children should be regarded **as children first** and are entitled to assessment, support and protection in the same way as any other child and their best interests are paramount. These children are separated from their country of origin and are without the care and protection of their parents or legal guardian. Their status, age and circumstances may well be uncertain in addition to their having witnessed or experienced traumatic events, and they may be suffering the most extreme forms of loss.

There are many reasons why Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children may leave their home country. Some of the reasons include:

- fear of persecution, due to their religion, nationality, ethnicity, political opinion or social group
- parents have been killed, imprisoned or disappeared; in danger of being forced to fight or become a child soldier
- war, conflict
- poverty, deprivation
- sent abroad by parents/family

Unaccompanied children remain the responsibility of the local authority in whose geographical area they seek help. Section 20 of The Children Act 1989 requires local authorities to provide accommodation for children in need within their area whose assessed needs require this intervention. If a child is accommodated under Section 20 she/he becomes a 'Looked After Child'. There is a statutory duty placed on local authorities under the Children Act 1989 to assist 'children in need' and provide accommodation for certain groups of 'children in need'.

Following the Hillingdon Judgement (2003) guidance provided by the Department of Health (DoH) (2003) and the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) (2005), stipulates that support should be based on the same assessment procedures for citizen children, as set out in the "Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families" (NAW and the Home Office 2001).

## **7. Links with private fostering**

There are occasions when birth parents that intend to smuggle their children into the United Kingdom for a variety of reasons inadvertently subject their children to traffickers who agree to the contract with a child's birth parents but whose intention is to exploit. The adult in this scenario may be a distant relative or friend of the family. Children of asylum seekers whose parents are not in this country but were brought in by someone, and so were not unaccompanied at the time of arrival, are

included in this group. The primary objective of these traffickers is often to access benefits and housing.

Some traffickers may present themselves as private foster carers.

The Children Act 1989 defines Private Fostering as occurring when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is placed for more than 28 days in the care of someone who is not a close relative, guardian or someone with parental responsibility. Close relatives are defined in the Act as parents, step-parents, siblings, brother or sisters of a parent, and grandparents.

## **8. Trafficking within the UK**

Child trafficking should not only be seen as a crime against foreign children being brought into the UK or in transit to other countries. UK born children may also be recruited for internal trafficking within the UK.

There are documented cases of teenage girls, born in the UK, being targeted for internal trafficking between towns and cities for sexual exploitation. Such cases are highlighted by the Coalition for the Removal of Pimping (CROP) in its paper, *Trafficking in Our Midst*. It describes how girls are lured away from their families to perform sexual acts with individual or groups of older men and are threatened with violence if they refuse. More information about CROP now known as PACE Parents against Child Sexual Exploitation and their research is available at: [www.paceuk.org.uk](http://www.paceuk.org.uk)

In respect of Welsh children being trafficked for sexual exploitation please refer to All Wales Protocol Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children at risk of or involved in Sexual Exploitation.

## **9. Role and responsibility of Children Services, as First Responders, in respect of children who may have been trafficked:**

In principle all agencies and organisations who find themselves with grounds for concern that a person may be a victim of human trafficking have a responsibility for identifying the person as a possible victim and putting him or her in touch with the responsible authorities and support providers.

For children, a formal referral into the NRM is made by a first responder. These are:

- Local Authorities Children Services and designated persons within Safeguarding Children Boards (Child Protection Committees in Scotland)
- Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT) (Northern Ireland)

- Home Office UK Immigration & Visas Directorate (formerly UKBA)
- Border Force
- Police
- Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA)
- Barnardo's
- CTAC (NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice Centre)

Trafficked children, or children where there have been concerns expressed about the suspicion of trafficking, must always be dealt with within mainstream child care policies and procedures, including child protection where necessary.

The responsibilities of Children's Services (as a First Responder organisation) towards child victims of trafficking may include:

- Identifying a LA lead for trafficking;
- Identifying victims/potential victims according to agreed profiles or receiving referrals from other agencies who have
- Identified them;
- Contributing to joint inter-agency profiling of victims/potential victims;
- Undertaking initial interviews, including joint interviews with local police, to assess risk, harm and agreed child protection plans;
- Providing victims/potential victims with a place of safety, including accommodation by the LA;
- Providing support services (e.g. legal advice, counselling);
- Monitoring of Looked After Children for signs that they are meeting the traffickers, which may include monitoring phone calls and providing a supportive environment so that the child does not leave with the trafficker. **This may necessitate taking legal steps to ensure the protection of the child;**
- Working with a specialist agency, such as the British Red Cross or NSPCC, in the finding of relatives in country of origin, and
- Verifying what would be in the best interests of the child, and whether they should be able to remain in the UK or if it is safe to return home;
- Ensuring that voluntary organisations or other support services are available if they are returned to their country of origin;
- Providing advice on whom to contact concerning their immigration status;
- Assisting in the identification of possible traffickers masquerading as relatives; and
- Ensuring contact with the police and providing information to the police.



**Please refer to:**

- **All Wales Guidance and Protocol in relation to all agencies roles and responsibilities**
- **National Referral Mechanism: guidance for child first responders – Home Office**

## **10. Key indicators a child may have been trafficked**

Some indicators of trafficking might include situations in which the child, in particularly associated with identification at point of entry:

- Has entered the country illegally
- Has no passport or other means of identification
- Has false documentation
- Is unable to confirm the name and address of the person meeting them on arrival
- Is being cared for or accompanied by adult/s who are not their parents
- Is excessively afraid of being deported
- Has had their journey or visa arranged by someone other than themselves or their family
- Or the person in control of the child has previously made multiple visa applications for other children and/or has acted as the guarantor for other children's visa applications
- Or is known to have acted as the guarantor on the visa applications for other visitors who have not returned to their countries of origin on the expiry of those visas
- Possesses money and goods not accounted for
- Is withdrawn and refuses to talk

**Some indicators of trafficking might include situations in which the child, in particularly associated with identification once young person is living within community:**

- Is being cared for or accompanied by adult/s who are not their parents – Private Fostering Arrangements (Victoria Climbié)
- Possesses money and goods not accounted for
- Receives unexplained/unidentified phone calls whilst in placement/temporary accommodation
- Is withdrawn and refuses to talk
- Is driven around by an older male or 'boyfriend'
- Shows signs of sexual behaviour or language
- Shows signs of physical or sexual abuse, and/or has contracted a sexually transmitted disease

- Has a history with missing links and unexplained moves
- Has gone missing from local authority care
- Is required to earn a minimum amount of money every day
- Works in various locations
- Has limited freedom of movement
- Appears to be missing for periods
- Is known to beg for money
- Has not been registered with or attended a GP practice
- Has not been enrolled in school
- Has to pay off an exorbitant debt, e.g. for travel costs, before having control over own earnings
- Is permanently deprived of a large part of their earnings by another person

## 11. Referral

As with all Child Protection concerns, all agencies should refer any concerns that a child is at risk of or involved in Child Trafficking to Social Services following the process set out in Part 3 of the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008)

## 12. Actions to be taken once child identified by safeguarding First responder

*Note: Many of these actions are about monitoring or restricting movement/contact/finances as a means to safeguard*

*The intention is not to make the child feel as though he or she has been imprisoned. Any safeguarding measures must endeavour not to replicate or mimic any of the child's trafficking or exploitative experiences, which may include severe restrictions on the child's freedom.*

Immediate Action Must Do's	
<b>It is essential that a rapport is built with child immediately and that their views are central to any safety planning</b>	
	Establishment of multi-agency network <b>immediately</b> of key players i.e. Social Services; Police; UKBF; 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sector First Responder; Legal representation for child
	Take a photo of child immediately as a safeguarding action, <b>children can go missing within 24 hours</b>
	<b>Trafficked children are at high risk of going missing, and while the full risks to a child may not be clear, it is imperative to remember that the potential for harm could be immediate</b>

	<p><b>and long lasting</b></p> <p><b>The child's immediate care plan must include a risk assessment, contingency and recovery plan prior to going into placement to ensure immediate action should the child goes missing</b></p>
	<p>Did the child arrive with a mobile? Consider removal of mobile phone or replacing SIM card until risk has been assessed. Consider taking a separate record of any names/numbers stored in the mobile and recent call history. If replacing SIM card bear in mind that the child may have memorised contact numbers of traffickers. In some circumstances a mobile may be a means to track (triangulate) the child's location if he/she has gone missing.</p>
	<p>Explore cultural beliefs with child to establish whether the use of witchcraft is part of control mechanism used by traffickers.</p>
	<p><b>Check possessions and clothing for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact numbers (can be concealed in clothing)</li> <li>• Coached accounts on paper</li> <li>• Names of people</li> <li>• Medical papers or information about blood group type (possibility of trafficking for organ removal)</li> <li>• Possessions that may seem inappropriate for the child's age, culture or account of travel</li> </ul>
	<p>If the child is newly arrived in the UK, consider the account of their journey – is their physical presentation consistent with their account of travel? Are there indications that the child may have been in the UK for some time? Is the child's clothing likely to have been purchased in the UK; is the child familiar with the local area, transport, currency, language, and food? If so, the child may have local connections – consider the risk of placing the child in local area if the child is already known locally by individuals/traffickers.</p>
	<p>Consider potential or existing links to trafficking networks. Is there a large local community of the child's ethnic/cultural group - is there a risk that the child may be recognised in public or establish unsafe connections?</p>
	<p>Source specialist legal advice/representation in relation to trafficking, immigration and forced criminality for child or young person</p>
	<p>Provide fact sheet/timeline about immigration process to minimise anxieties.</p>
	<p>Where there is concern that a child may have been trafficked and an age dispute arises, the child should be given the benefit of the doubt as to their age and any age assessment halted</p>
	<p>Child may be in need of immediate health care. Consider the child's treatment, hazardous conditions, and access to necessities such as food, water and shelter, malnourishment,</p>

	exposure to extreme weather, exposure to unhygienic conditions or contagious illnesses, injuries, experiences of isolation.
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<b>Where and how to place a child safely issues for consideration</b>	
<b>A) Safety and location</b> <b>B) Appropriate placement</b>	
<b>A</b>	Child's placement must be secret and should not be revealed to alleged relatives/friends/contacts until a full risk assessment has been carried out
	Are there additional precautions required such as CCTV
	Consideration given to address having a PO Box address so that mail does not come to house and give address away
	Carers must be fully aware of child's background and understand importance of contact Police and Social Services immediately if there are concerns or dangers
	Carers must be alert to any loitering adults/young people/cars. Vigilance is important and details should be noted of car registration/names and descriptions of any individuals loitering
	Consider child's history – does the child pose a risk to other children?
	Consider risk of placing child with another child of same background or trafficking background – one child may re-establish contact with traffickers or may have never ceased contact
	Consider any access the child may have to documents, money and travel cards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does access to such items enable the child to utilise them to go missing</li> <li>• In some circumstances a travel card may be a means to track the child's journey if they go missing</li> <li>• Control of immigration papers and passports –if there is a risk that the child may travel abroad</li> </ul>

	<p>Contact with relatives/friends in the UK from child's country of origin requires risk assessing and consideration given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical access</li> <li>• Telephone/internet access</li> </ul>
<b>B</b>	<p>Research suggests specialist foster placement as being most appropriate for children who may have been trafficked</p>
	<p>Close adult supervision is essential. A needs/risk assessment will determine the level of adult supervision required, but initially consider 24/7 monitoring as full risks may not be apparent</p>
	<p>Consider cultural needs of child – is it appropriate to place the child with carers of the same cultural background, or does this create anxieties about association with past experiences, links to cultural community and risk of being recognised. Also consider issues of stigma, and whether the child feels comfortable associating with their cultural group</p>
	<p>Assess whether access to a phone or internet places the child at risk of contacting traffickers and compromises their location. The same precautions are required for any contact with the child's family of origin</p>
	<p>If placed with other children, can the child access other children's mobile phones</p>
	<p><b>Carers to monitor child for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxieties/trauma/injuries/signs of abuse</li> <li>• Is the child preoccupied with money or work, making contact with someone?</li> <li>• Does the child appear to be acting under the instruction of an adult?</li> <li>• Is the child guarded about their relationships and daily activities?</li> <li>• Evidence of substance misuse</li> </ul>

<b>Safety in Placement</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Movement outside of placement</b></li> <li>• <b>Health – physical and emotional</b></li> <li>• <b>Education</b></li> <li>• <b>Developing Protective Factors</b></li> </ul>
<b>A</b>	<b>Movement Outside of Placement</b>
	Should the child be permitted out alone, with other children?
	Should carers supervise movement?
	Restriction of movement and visitors (who their contacts are, what their activities are)?
	Is it appropriate for the child to attend religious institutions, community centres etc? Is it safe for child to be making links with their own cultural group (consider private religious tuition, other peer activities that engage a wider cultural representation)?
	Consider controlling pocket money or monitoring the use of money
	Is the child using the money for unauthorised contact purposes? Internet access, phone calls, purchasing phone cards?
	Unexplained use of savings/allowance – is the child giving his or her allowance to someone else?
	Does the child want more than one bank account? For what purpose? Is the child trying to avoid monitoring of their finances? Consider money laundering – others may use child's account
	Is the child saving money for any purpose (such as travelling internationally)?
<b>B</b>	<b>Health – Physical &amp; Emotional</b>
	Health checks and responses need to account for the child's journey, exploitation, abuse and neglect
	Dental checks – trafficked children's dental needs are often neglected
	Immunisations
	Sexual health checks
	Breathing or respiratory problems (consider children in cannabis factories)
	If substance misuse highlighted, consider a referral to specialist services
	Therapeutic/psychological services for the child to explore their experiences of trafficking/abuse/separation
	Develop child's awareness of risks and understanding of abuse/exploitation
	Consider trauma, sleep disturbances, depression and low self esteem
<b>C</b>	<b>Education</b>
	Consider the child's ability to engage in education and any specialist support required which may result from the child's experiences of trafficking/abuse/separation

	Consider any risk that the child's attendance at school may pose to other children
	Staff to be alert to adults/ young people or cars loitering near school or contacting child
	Staff to be aware of risk of abduction or intimidation of child.
	Specialist education support – consider language, gaps in education or lack of education
	Monitor indications of work/exploitation - explore truancy, poor attendance, and tiredness at school
	<b>Behavioural difficulties in placement or at school - consider whether child is being pressured by a trafficker to be moved to their care, and whether child is intentionally trying to sabotage a placement, or whether an older child is being pressured to leave school to work.</b>
	Consider normalisation of abusive relationships and whether the child has developed a dependant relationship with his/her trafficker
	Consider child's ability to determine risk, and to differentiate between benevolent and sinister intentions of others
	Consider cultural and gender differences
	A child may have been forced into adult roles/work, and may not behave as a child
	Clandestine nature of trafficking can create an 'underworld mentality' – child may engage in subterfuge behaviour
<b>D</b>	<b>Develop Protective Factors</b>
	<b>Develop protective factors</b> – a sense of physical and emotional safety, positive relationships with peers, aspirations, interests and activities, role modelling/mentoring, personal safety skills. Build links with specialist services such as ECPAT, NSPCC, Barnardo's possible link into young persons peer groups to promote positive safe relationships, aspirations